

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EA-06 IO-03 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05

CIAE-00 SP-02 PM-03 L-01 EB-03 EURE-00 DODE-00 /051 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3192

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 15855

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GW

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S MOOD AS THE CAMPAIGN
ADVANCES

BEGIN SUMMARY. AS CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT ADVANCES INTO
BONN'S NEW POLITICAL SEASON, AND EVEN AS HE PREPARES
FOR HIS VISITS TO WASHINGTON AND TO PEKING, GERMAN
DOMESTIC POLITICS ARE NOW UPPERMOST IN HIS MIND AND
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MOST CENTRAL TO HIS ATTITUDES. END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH THE GERMAN ELECTION IS MORE THAN A YEAR AWAY, THE CAMPAIGN HAS ALREADY STARTED IN EARNEST. FROM NOW ON UNTIL AFTER THE ELECTION, THAT CAMPAIGN AND HIS DRIVE FOR VICTORY WILL REMAIN SCHMIDT'S MOST INTENSE PREOCCUPATIONS. HE WILL SEE AND JUDGE ALL OTHER ISSUES PRINCIPALLY IN THE LIGHT OF THEIR EFFECT ON THE CAMPAIGN.

2. SUCH AN ATTITUDE, WHICH WOULD BE NORMAL FOR ANY POLITICIAN, WILL BE PARTICULARLY STRONG IN SCHMIDT'S CASE FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS;

A. SCHMIDT'S OWN CHARACTER, PERSONALITY AND INSTINCTS ARE THOSE OF A FIGHTER. HE IS TOUGH, COMBATIVE, SCORNFUL AND ALWAYS READY TO DO BATTLE. IN A FIGHT, HE DOES EVERYTHING TO WIN. HE SUPPRESSED SOME OF HIS MORE OVERT PARTISAN TENDENCIES IN ORDER TO PRESENT A STATESMAN'S IMAGE DURING THE YEAR AFTER HIS ACCESSION TO LEADERSHIP, BUT IN THE INCIPIENT HEAT OF THE CAMPAIGN THEY ARE ALREADY REEMERGING.

B. SCHMIDT IS ACUTELY CONSCIOUS THAT THIS IS THE FIRST ELECTION AT WHICH HIS OWN POLICIES AND LEADERSHIP WILL BE SUBJECT TO NATION-WIDE JUDGEMENT. HE CAME TO OFFICE BY A FREAK ACCIDENT. SINCE THIS IS HIS FIRST NATIONAL CAMPAIGN HE IS ALL THE MORE DETERMINED TO WIN.

C. SCHMIDT IS ALSO CONSCIOUS THAT HIS OWN LEADERSHIP OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY MAY BE AT STAKE. AS A PARTY LEADER, SCHMIDT INCORPORATES THE PRAGMATIC MODERN MANAGER TYPE. WHAT HE OFFERS THE PARTY IS DIRECTION AND VICTORY, NOT IDEOLOGICAL PURITY OR COMFORT. THOUGH THE PARTY INITIALLY WELCOMED HIS FIRM LEADERSHIP AFTER ITS EXPERIENCE WITH BRANDT'S EMOTIONALISM AND MISMANAGEMENT, SCHMIDT WELL KNOWS THAT HE IS MORE RESPECTED THAN BELOVED, AND THAT HE WILL BE UNDER SEVERE CHALLENGE IF HE CANNOT PRODUCE SUCCESS. SOME PARTY MEMBERS EVEN RESENT THE FACT THAT SCHMIDT STANDS HIGHER THAN THE PARTY IN POLLS; THEY ACCUSE HIM OF FURTHERING

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HIS OWN POPULARITY RATHER THAN THE PARTY'S, AND WILL BE MORE READY TO BLAME HIM FOR A LOSS.

D. SCHMIDT HAS ALWAYS PREFERRED DEALING WITH THE "BIG ISSUES" RATHER THAN THE NITTY-GRITTY, DAY-BY-DAY WORK OF POLITICIANS. THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS HE LET WILLY BRANDT RUN THE SPD WHILE HE CONCENTRATED ON GOVERNING THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. HOWEVER, HE KNOWS THAT

WINNING NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION (I.E. MAINTAINING A SOCIAL-LIBERAL MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG) WILL REQUIRE HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION AND CONSIDERABLE CONCENTRATION ON MINUTE DETAILS. AS HE WILL HAVE TO EXPEND SO MUCH FRUSTRATING EFFORT IN UNWELCOME TASKS, HE WILL BE ALL THE MORE RESOLUTE THAT THE EFFORT SHOULD SUCCEED.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER OR ECONOMIC MINISTER FRIDERICH'S DO NOT REFLECT SCHMIDT'S POLITICAL ATTITUDE EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE PART OF THE SAME COALITION. SCHMIDT, WHO TAKES LITTLE COUNSEL

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AND GIVES FEW INSIGHTS INTO HIS THINKING, HAS NO CLOSE COLLABORATORS. MOREOVER, GENSCHER AND FRIDERICHs BOTH BELONG TO THE FDP, A PARTY THAT HAS ALLIED ITSELF WITH THE SOCIALISTS MORE FOR REASONS OF PARLIAMENTARY MATHEMATICS THAN OUT OF ANY PARTICULAR PHILOSOPHICAL AFFINITY. THEY CERTAINLY HAVE NO EMOTIONAL COMMITMENT TO A SCHMIDT TRIUMPH, THOUGH THE FDP LEADERSHIP HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD REMAIN COMMITTED TO A COALITION WITH THE SOCIALISTS DURING THE CAMPAIGN.

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4. SCHMIDT NOW WANTS TO MINIMIZE OR AVERT ANY PROBLEMS THAT WILL JEOPARDIZE HIS CHANCES, COMPLICATE THE ISSUES ON WHICH HE FEELS CONFIDENT, OR SHOW THAT HE CANNOT HANDLE OR INFLUENCE THOSE MATTERS CENTRAL TO GERMAN CONCERNS. SOME OF HIS RECENT ACTIONS REFLECT THESE ATTITUDES. IN HIS POLICY DECLARATION BEFORE THE BUNDESTAG LAST WEEK, HE PLACED ALL BLAME FOR GERMANY'S ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ON INTERNATIONAL FORCES RATHER THAN ON HIS OWN GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. THIS WEEK, HE HAS TRIED TO SUPPRESS OR AT LEAST DISMISS THE MOST RECENT RECURRENCE OF REGIONAL SOCIALIST PROPOSALS FOR GOVERNMENT-DIRECTED INVESTMENTS.

5. UNLESS SCHMIDT FEELS DESPERATE AND IN NEED OF SOME SPECTACULAR, HE WILL OPPOSE SUDDEN POLICY SHIFTS WITH UNPREDICTABLE POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES. HE WILL FAVOR ANY MEASURES THAT HE CAN JUSTIFY AS CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL PROSPERITY AND TO THE MAINTENANCE OF GERMAN SECURITY AND STABILITY. HE WILL LOOK ASKANCE AT ANYTHING THAT WILL RAISE DOUBTS OR UNCERTAINTIES IN THE MINDS OF GERMAN VOTERS. HE WILL VIEW ALL INTERNATIONAL AS WELL AS DOMESTIC ISSUES PRINCIPALLY IN THE LIGHT OF HOW THEY WILL AFFECT HIS CHANCES IN OCTOBER, 1976.
HILLENBRAND

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